

REMARKS

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been obviated by revising independent claims 1, 7, and 15 so that they more clearly distinguish the invention from the prior art of record. However, before the specific language of the Amendment is discussed, a brief recap of the principal features and advantages of the invention will be made so that the language used in the Amendment may be more fully appreciated.

Generally speaking, the invention is a vehicle mirror assembly and method that facilitates the manufacture of the vehicle mirror. One aspect of the invention is the provision of a retracting unit 16 having a stand 18 which is secured by screws 22 onto the door mirror stay 12 as described in the sixth procedure of the method of the invention on page 9. Such a feature helps to provide a mirror assembly that is easier to manufacture.

Claims 1, 7, and 15 have all been amended to recite this particular aspect of the invention. Specifically, amended claim 1 now recites a vehicle mirror assembly that comprises a mirror, a mirror visor that supports the mirror, a bracket accommodated within the mirror visor, a door mirror stay adapted to be connected to the door of the vehicle, and "a retracting unit having a stand and a rotating portion connecting said bracket to said door mirror stay . . ." Similarly, claim 7 now recites a method for assembling a vehicle mirror assembly having a retracting unit that comprises the steps of "mounting the retracting unit to the [brackets of the mirror assembly]," and then "mounting the retracting unit to a door mirror stay to mount the vehicle mirror assembly to the door of the vehicle . . ."

None of the references of record either discloses or suggests the vehicle mirror assembly or assembly method described in claims 1, 7, and 15. In particular, in the Polzer '480 patent, the support plate 3 of the rear view mirror includes an extension plate 10 that is directly mounted to the mirror base in order to remain vibration free. Note in particular, column 4, lines 7-9:

the support plate 3 is vibration-free mounted to the mirror base 2 and suppresses any vibrations in view of its beads and impressions.

Please further note the limitations in the fifth paragraphs of claims 1 and 5, which recite a support plate having a laterally projecting extension, which is "directly" connected to the mirror base.

As the Polzer '480 patent effectively teaches against the provision of a retracting unit for connecting the mirror bracket to the door mirror stay, and instead teaches directly connecting the mirror support plate to the mirror base, claims 1, 7, and 15 are clearly patentable over the Polzer '480 patent, both with respect to § 102(b) and § 103 of Title 35.

As the balance of the pending claims are dependent upon either independent claims 1, 7, or 15, each of these claims is patentable at least by reason of such dependency.

In particular, claim 8 is patentable further by virtue of its recitation of the additional assembly step of "placing the bracket on a bracket jig before mounting the visor rim to one of surface of the bracket." The Polzer '480 patent makes no reference at all to such an assembly step. Accordingly, claim 8 is clearly patentable over the art of record.

Claims 9 and 10 likewise recite assembly steps that are neither disclosed nor suggested in any portion of the Polzer '480 patent. In particular, claim 9 recites the further assembly step of "disposing the bracket substantially horizontally before mounting the visor rim . . .," while claim 10 recites "mounting the mirror to one surface of the bracket after mounting the visor rim before mounting the visor cover." As such manufacturing steps are not remotely hinted at in the Polzer '480 patent, and as the principal object of the instant invention is to provide a vehicle mirror assembly that is easy and economical to assemble, these claims are clearly patentable over the art of record.

Claims 11, 12, 13, and 14 are likewise clearly patentable. Each of these claims again recites assembly steps which are not remotely disclosed or suggested in the Polzer '480 patent. The specific advantages associates with these assembly steps are described in detail on page 10. In particular, such steps reduce the possibility that the door mirror visor 38 is scratched during assembly. For all of these reasons dependent claims 12, 13, and 14 are each clearly patentable over the art of record.

Similarly, dependent claims 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 each include method steps which are neither disclosed or suggested in any portion of the Polzer '480 patent. Accordingly, for the

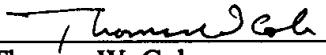
Docket No. 0165-279
Serial No. 09/752,836
Page 6

same reasons given with respect to the other dependent claims, these claims are clearly patentable.

Finally, as new claim 21 includes all the limitations of claims 15, 16, 19, and 20, this claim is clearly patentable over the art of record.

Now that the claims are believed to be allowable, the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is hereby earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED UP VERSION

1. (Amended) A vehicle mirror assembly comprising:
 - (A) a mirror having a back surface and an outer peripheral surface; [and]
 - (B) a mirror visor supporting the mirror, the mirror visor having a visor cover opposing the back surface of the mirror, and a visor rim covering the outer peripheral surface of the mirror;
 - (C) a bracket accommodated within the mirror visor;
 - (D) a door mirror stay adapted to be connected to the door of a vehicle, and
 - (E) a retracting unit having a stand and a rotating portion connecting said bracket to said door mirror stay.

Please cancel claim 2.

7. (Amended) A method for assembling a vehicle mirror assembly, wherein the assembly includes a mirror having an outer peripheral surface and a back surface, a mirror visor having a visor cover for covering the back surface of the mirror, [and] a visor rim for covering the outer peripheral surface of the mirror, a retracting unit, and a bracket having opposite surfaces, the method comprising:

mounting the retracting unit to the bracket;
[(a)] mounting the visor rim to one surface of the bracket; [and]
[(b)] mounting the visor cover to one of the other surface of the bracket and the visor rim from the other surface side of the bracket, and
mounting the retracting unit to a door mirror stay to mount the vehicle mirror assembly to the door of a vehicle.

15. (Amended) A method for assembling a vehicle mirror assembly, wherein the assembly includes a mirror having an outer peripheral surface and a back surface, a mirror visor

for covering the back surface and outer peripheral surfaces of the mirror, a retracting unit having a stand and a rotating portion, and a bracket having opposite surfaces for accommodation within the mirror visor, the method comprising:

mounting the rotating portion of the retracting unit to the bracket;

[(a)] mounting the mirror to one surface of the bracket; [and]

[(b)] mounting the mirror visor to the other surface of the bracket from the other surface side of the bracket, and

mounting the stand of the retracting unit to a door mirror stay to mount the vehicle mirror assembly to the door of a vehicle.

Please add the following new claim:

21. (New) A method for assembling a vehicle mirror assembly, wherein the assembly includes a mirror having an outer peripheral surface and a back surface, a mirror visor for covering the back surface and outer peripheral surfaces of the mirror, a retracting unit having a stand and a rotating portion, and a bracket having opposite surfaces for accommodation within the mirror visor, the method comprising:

mounting the rotating portion of the retracting unit to the bracket;

mounting the mirror to one surface of the bracket;

mounting the mirror visor to the other surface of the bracket from the other surface side of the bracket;

mounting the stand of the retracting unit to a door mirror stay to mount the vehicle mirror assembly to the door of a vehicle, and further including the steps of

placing the bracket on a bracket jig before mounting the mirror to one surface of the bracket;

removing the bracket from the bracket jig after mounting the mirror and before mounting the mirror visor,

wherein removing the bracket from the bracket jig includes repositioning the bracket to face in the opposite direction.